

# Spring cleaning hits the ponds

## Group picks up trash at area ponds through May

Teams of volunteers for the city's Urban Ponds Restoration Program are giving the city's ponds a much-needed sprucing up, but the major source of pollution is a long-term problem.

Although the volunteers remove thousands of pounds of unsightly trash and junk from the city's five ponds each year, bacteria- and nutrient-rich urban run-off is the major culprit that makes the ponds unsafe for swimming.

UPRP Coordinator Art Grindle said the program's major goal is to return the ponds to their historical uses, including swimming, fishing and boating.

That could take a number of years, he said, and investments into controls for reducing run-off into the ponds.

Last Saturday morning, members of the Dorrs Pond Preservation Society carted out four or five trash bags full of broken glass, cigarette butts and other refuse from the shores of the small man-made pond at Livingston Park.

It's hard work for a small group of women of a certain age, but Terri Dumensil, Blanche Grondin and Rita Espinoza completed their largest task several years ago, when they secured state grant funding for installation of drainage improvements up-stream to halt the flow of polluted storm water into the pond.

Now the women of the Dorrs Pond Preservation Society can see the enjoyment of their neighborhood park is growing along with a cleaner pond.

Dumensil said that trash and vandalism have decreased at the park in recent years, in part because of the cleaner, more usable walking trails around the pond.

"You see people walking and walking



Espinoza, Dumensil, Grondin. Photo by John Zorabedian

their dogs and you're not afraid of somebody jumping out of the bushes at you," Dumensil said.

Grindle said the increased number of dogs in Livingston Park has resulted in a type of self-policing with dog owners for the most part cleaning up after their pets.

"Now it's a peer pressure thing," Grindle said.

Over the last three weekends, Grindle has pulled dozens of tires and a number of mattresses and other junk from McQuesten and Maxwell Ponds.

Grindle still needs volunteers to come out over the next two Saturdays to clean Stevens Pond, May 8, and Nutts Pond, May 15, both between 9 a.m. and noon.

The UPRP also has volunteer programs for water sampling and weed watching. For more information, visit the UPRP page on the city's web site, <http://www.manchesternh.gov/CityGov/DPW/EPD/SEPP/Pond/Home.html>.

—John Zorabedian